

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the captioned patent application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An external component of a cochlear implant hearing system, comprising:
 - a speech processor module comprising a housing, housing and processing circuitry that receives signals output by a microphone, and one or more connectors; and
 - a protective case configured to interface with said one or more connectors;wherein said speech processor unit is removably mountable within said case and operable while mounted therein.
2. (Previously Presented) The external component of claim 1, wherein said case comprises:
 - a base member; and
 - a cover member matable with said base member to form an enclosure,wherein when said cover member and said base member are attached to each other, said case is at least resistant to fluid ingress.
3. (Currently Amended) The external component of claim 1, wherein said microphone is an internal microphone mounted on or within said housing of said speech processor module, and wherein said speech processor module is configured to receive signals output from an from said internal microphone mounted on or within said housing of said speech processor module.
4. (Currently Amended) The external component of ~~claim 3~~ claim 1, wherein said microphone is external to said speech processor module, and wherein said speech processor module is configured to receive and process signals output from said microphone external to said speech processor module. ~~is configured to receive and process signals generated by a microphone external to said speech processor module.~~

5. (Currently Amended) The external component of ~~claim 4~~ claim 1, wherein said speech processor module is configured to be operably connected to a power supply.

6. (Currently Amended) The external component of claim 5, wherein ~~a second connector is provided on either of said housing or said power supply to provide said one or more connectors~~ comprise electrical pin connectors, and wherein said protective case is configured to facilitate an electrical interface between said pin connectors with said power supply.
~~suitable electrical transmission between said power supply and said speech processor module.~~

7. (Previously Presented) The external component of claim 1, wherein said case is adapted to prevent all fluid ingress when said cover member is closed relative to said base member.

8. (Previously Presented) The external component of claim 1, wherein said case is adapted to at least substantially prevent dust ingress when said cover member and said base member are mated to each other.

9. (Previously Presented) The external component of claim 2, wherein said case further comprises:

a sheath with a gasket around the perimeter thereof that overlies said speech processor module when said speech processor module is mounted in said base member, wherein said gasket and sheath, when in position, can seal with a perimeter wall of said base member.

10. (Currently Amended) A protective case for a speech processor unit of a hearing prosthesis, comprising:

a base member for removably receiving a dual-mode speech processor module, said speech processor module having one or more connectors operable in a stand-alone mode of operation and a body-worn mode of operation; and

a cover member adapted to mate with said base member to form said protective case, wherein said base member or said cover member is configured to interface with said one or more connectors of said speech processor module ~~implements in said body-worn mode of operation when mounted in said base member.~~

11. (Previously Presented) The protective case of claim 10, wherein when the cover member is closed relative to the base member, the case can be at least resistant to fluid ingress.

12. (Previously Presented) The protective case of claim 10, wherein said case is adapted to prevent fluid ingress when said cover member is closed relative to said base member.

13. (Previously Presented) The protective case of claim 12, wherein said case is adapted to at least substantially prevent dust ingress when the cover member is closed relative to the base member.

14. (Currently Amended) A speech processor module comprising:

a self-contained housing;

wherein said speech processor module is configured to interface with a first set of one or more components to provide a stand-alone behind-the-ear (BTE) speech processing unit; and

wherein said speech processor module is further configured to interface with a second set of one or more components to provide a body-worn speech processing unit—configured to operate as a component of a stand-alone speech processing unit and as a component of a body-worn speech processing unit.

15. (Currently Amended) The speech processor module of claim 14, wherein said second set of components comprises a case that protects said speech processor module from environmental conditions which can damage said speech processor module. ~~where said stand-alone speech processing unit is a behind-the-ear (BTE) speech processing unit.~~

16. (Currently Amended) The speech processor module of claim 14, comprising:
an operational mode controller configured to select functional components internal to said speech processor module or functional components implemented in an external component system other than said speech processor module based on whether said speech processor module is to be implemented in said as a stand-alone BTE speech processing unit stand-alone mode of operation or said as a component of a body-worn speech processing unit. ~~body-worn mode of operation.~~

17. (Currently Amended) The speech processor module of claim 16, where said operational mode controller is configured to determine an ~~determines~~ said operational mode of said speech processor based on an identifying feature of a power supply connected to said speech processor module.

18. (Currently Amended) A speech processor module configured to be implemented in more than one mode of operation of a hearing prosthesis including as a component of a stand-alone speech processing mode, and unit, and as a component of a body-worn speech processing mode, comprising: ~~unit, wherein said body-worn speech processing unit comprises a case that protects the speech processor module from environmental conditions which can damage said speech processor module implemented in said stand-alone operating mode~~

an operational selector configured to select the operational mode of said speech processor module; and

a user controls selector to select the applicable user controls based on the determination of said operational mode selector.

19. (New) The external component of claim 1, wherein said one or more connectors comprise a cable connector for receiving a cable, and wherein said case comprises a grommet sealed orifice configured to interface with said cable inserted in said cable connector.